

## MENTAL PATIENT

The supervisor hovers about,  
periodically shaking Rick  
and screaming "Earth to Rick! Earth to Rick!"  
into his ear.

Rick moves and laughs and flexes his fingers  
and follows the path of his machine's cut  
for a minute or two,  
until he stops halfway through a swivel  
in his leather chair  
and his eyes are suddenly glazed again  
and he has gone back  
to that place no one else knows anything about,  
as he sits transfixed and a million miles away,  
his machine turning automatically  
through a 40- or 50- or 60-minute cut,  
the supervisor hovering and shaking him and screaming,  
glad to take care of someone  
with such an exceptional talent  
for never getting bored,  
no matter how monotonous and mindless  
a job gets.

## FRINGE BENEFIT

The janitor towed lines of dumpsters  
up and down the machine shop aisles,  
across the loose steel plates  
that covered the scrap-metal conveyor belts  
under the aisles.

The janitor nodded with booze as he drove,  
tipping forward and sideways  
in the towmotor seat,  
leaning like he was about to fall out,  
his eyes red and barely open.

But he made the machine shop explode  
with the pops and bangs and cracks  
of the steel dumpsters jarring and bouncing  
across the steel plates  
as he drove the towmotor FAST  
down the aisles.

Not only did this keep him awake,  
it helped ruin the already raw nerves  
of the machine shop supervisors.

Every job has its rewards.